

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS



Crystal Lazarus

Senior Director, Planning & Strategy
Goodwill of North Georgia

Background

Earned a Bachelor's degree in accounting from Georgia State University and a master's in government and non-profit accounting from Rutgers University. My career has spanned roles at notable nonprofits and government agencies, including the Emergency Management Agency for Georgia/Homeland Security, Atlanta Regional Commission, Emory University and Goodwill of North Georgia. I have also served as treasurer on the board of directors for Science ATL and United Way Young Professionals, as well as Healthmpowers. Recently, I graduated from Leadership North Fulton through the Greater North Fulton Chambers. I am actively involved in community initiatives, both at my church and workplace, and am passionate about leveraging my accounting expertise to help nonprofits and government organizations achieve financial success through responsible stewardship. While undergraduate studies often emphasize joining a Big Four accounting firm, my career path led me to specialize in government pass-through grants, which is now my primary focus. I find deep meaning in administering grants for emergency preparedness and job readiness. These efforts go beyond financial metrics and are rooted in serving people.

Candidate Profile: Financial Operations

My core competencies include financial operations and reporting. I am skilled in reading, preparing, analyzing, and interpreting P&L statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements. I also have extensive experience with Single Audits, general audits, and subgrantee risk assessments, and am currently pursuing CPA credentials. My background as comptroller for Union City, Georgia has given me familiarity with CARF standards, municipal council meetings, and budget adoption processes. I am recognized as a collaborator who enjoys convening diverse teams.

Board Experience

In my board roles, I reviewed and presented financial reports, coordinated audits with external auditors, and delivered fundraising updates. I also helped establish a chartered investment group, maintaining formal governance and meeting documentation.

NGMA Experience/Volunteering

I have participated in the NGMA local structure and recently encouraged my staff to attend a local NGMA meeting in Atlanta.

Goal of NGMA's Strategic Framework That Most Resonates with Me

NGMA's strategic goal, "to elevate the role of grants management professionals in stewarding grant funds and promoting the profession" resonates deeply with me, especially in today's challenging environment of reduced funding and increased demands. Stewardship of taxpayer dollars and fulfilling grant objectives are central to our work, and building trust with funders and the public is essential.

Top Two Challenges Over the Next 3-5 Years for the Profession

Looking ahead, two major challenges for grants management professionals are adapting to AI-driven efficiencies and navigating a landscape with fewer grants. While AI can enhance our work, it cannot replace the human relationships and programmatic impact that define our profession. Additionally, reduced funding may eliminate roles at various levels, making adaptability and stewardship more important than ever.